



BEHIND THE COUNTER

Winter 2010

Recent Settlement has Employers Uneasy

A recent drug-pricing settlement agreement against drug wholesaler McKesson Corp. and publishers First Databank and Medi-Span may have significant implications in the pharmacy benefit arena. The defendants had allegedly raised the prices of hundreds of prescriptions drugs artificially by 5 percent. The publishers had raised prices on the pricing index that PBMs use to set prices for clients.

The settlement requires the publishers to correct the inflated prices. As a result, PBMs must also roll back their Average Wholesale Price (AWP), plus find a replacement for the index, as the publishers in question will not be publishing it for the next two years.

Employers are concerned that these changes could cause their prescription benefit costs to increase; that anxiety is not eased by the fact that many have heard nothing concrete from their PBMs regarding the changes. Employers should carefully review their PBM contracts for language regarding the pricing change and be sure to understand any implications these changes could have on their own plan.

Source: Employee Benefit News

Medical Adherence

People with chronic conditions such as diabetes, high blood pressure, arthritis and depression require a consistent medication regimen in order to effectively manage their disease. Adhering strictly to a prescription regimen can prevent treatments from failing, conditions from worsening, and serious complications from arising. From the employer's standpoint, properly managing chronic conditions can prevent costly future medical bills and promote better overall employee health.

Employers can play a big role in helping employees adhere to their medication regimens. Addressing reasons that employees struggle with adherence is a smart approach, which include:

- Employees may have difficulty with the high cost of prescriptions. Some employers offer lower co-pays for chronic medication or offer rewards or rebates for consistently filling necessary prescriptions.
- Some employers have found success adding a worksite health clinic and/or pharmacy to make managing chronic conditions more convenient for employees.
- Many employees don't understand the importance of strict adherence, thinking that if symptoms fade, the medication is no longer necessary. Employers should educate employees about the importance of adherence and the consequences of not following through on necessary treatment and medication programs.

New Initiatives Launched at Popular Pharmacy Chains

Walgreens and CVS Caremark recently introduced new services aimed at making medical adherence and prescription management easier for consumers.

Walgreens' new initiative is a 90-day prescription program that will help patients better manage chronic conditions. Many insurers offer 90-day mail-order prescription, which consumers appreciate because of the ease and convenience. However, Walgreens' consumer research indicates that many patients still prefer the personal feel of using their local pharmacy over mail-orders, so Walgreens is aiming to give consumers the benefits of the 90-day prescription while maintaining the relationship with their local pharmacist.

CVS Caremark's new program expands on their existing partnership with Microsoft® HealthVault™. Any patients with a personal health record through Microsoft HealthVault will now be able to download their complete prescription information and history into the record. This will help patients access a more complete view of their medical record, along with the ability to provide their physicians with more visibility to their prescription history.

Source: Employee Benefit News



BEHIND THE COUNTER

First-Time Generics

| Generic Name | Brand Name | Approval Date | Uses |
|---|---------------------------|---------------|--|
| Testosterone Enanthate | Delatestryl | 10/05/09 | Replacement therapy (males); breast cancer (females) |
| Cetirizine Hydrochloride | Zyrtec | 10/07/09 | Antihistamine |
| Buprenorphine | Subutex, Suboxone | 10/08/09 | Treat opioid dependence |
| Risperidone | Risperdal | 10/08/09 | Antipsychotic |
| Sumatriptan Succinate | Imitrex | 10/09/09 | Migraine treatment |
| Topiramate | Topamax | 10/14/09 | Epilepsy; migraine |
| Fentanyl | Fentora, Onsolis | 10/16/09 | "Breakthrough" cancer pain |
| Chlorothiazide Sodium | Diuril | 10/16/09 | Diuretic |
| Melphalan Hydrochloride | Alkeran | 10/27/09 | Chemotherapy |
| Levetiracetam | Keppra | 10/27/09 | Epilepsy |
| Fentanyl Citrate | Actiq | 10/30/09 | Cancer pain |
| Lamotrigine | Lamictal | 11/04/09 | Epilepsy |
| Cefotaxime Sodium | Claforan | 11/05/09 | Various infections |
| Ketorolac Tromethamine | Toradol | 11/05/09 | Moderately severe, acute pain |
| Norethindrone Acetate and Ethinyl Estradiol | Estrostep Fe, Loestrin Fe | 11/06/09 | Birth control |
| Methocarbamol | Robaxin | 11/06/09 | Muscle relaxer |
| Benzonatate | Tessalon | 11/09/09 | Cough reliever |
| Azithromycin | Zithromax | 11/09/09 | Antibiotic |
| Lansoprazole | Prevacid | 11/10/09 | Ulcers |
| Perindopril Erbumine | Aceon | 11/10/09 | Hypertension |
| Ciclopirox | Loprox, Penlac | 11/10/09 | Fungal infections of the skin |
| Irinotecan Hydrochloride | Camptosar | 11/12/09 | Metastatic colorectal cancer |
| Tramadol Hydrochloride | Ultram | 11/13/09 | Moderate to severe pain |
| Butalbital, Acetaminophen, and Caffeine | Fioricet, Esgic | 11/16/09 | Pain reliever |
| Betaxolol | Kerlone | 11/16/09 | Hypertension |
| Nicardipine Hydrochloride | Cardene | 11/17/09 | Chronic chest pain, hypertension |
| Ciprofloxacin in Dextrose 5% in plastic container | Cipro | 11/18/09 | Antibiotic for treating bacterial infections |

| | | | |
|---|--|----------|---|
| Nizatidine | Axid | 11/18/09 | Ulcers |
| Dorzolamide Hydrochloride and Timolol Maleate | Cosopt | 11/18/09 | Glaucoma |
| Dorzolamide Hydrochloride | Trusopt | 11/18/09 | Glaucoma |
| Calcipotriene | Dovonex | 11/19/09 | Plaque psoriasis |
| Caffeine Citrate | Cafcit | 11/20/09 | Breathing problems in premature infants |
| Methadone Hydrochloride | Symoron, Dolophine, Amidone and others | 11/25/09 | Treatment of opioid dependence, pain management |
| Divalproex Sodium | Depakote | 11/30/09 | Treats seizure disorders |
| Fosphenytoin Sodium | Cerebyx | 12/2/09 | Epileptic seizures |
| Chloroquine Phosphate | Aralen | 12/03/09 | Treat or prevent malaria |
| Hydromorphone Hydrochloride | Dilaudid | 12/09/09 | Moderate to severe pain |
| Paclitaxel | Taxol | 12/09/09 | Cancer treatment |
| Tramadol Hydrochloride & Acetaminophen | Ultracet | 12/09/09 | Short term acute pain management |
| Donepezil Hydrochloride | Aricept | 12/11/09 | Relieves early Alzheimer's symptoms |
| Ranitidine Hydrochloride | Zantac | 12/11/09 | Ulcers; other gastrointestinal conditions |
| Cromolyn Sodium | Intal, Gastrocrom | 12/18/09 | Asthma; bronchospasm |
| Epirubicin Hydrochloride | Ellence | 12/22/09 | Breast cancer |
| Ampicillin and Sulbactam | Unasyn | 12/22/09 | Antibiotic |
| Ciprofloxacin | Cipro | 12/22/09 | Antibiotic for treating bacterial infections |
| Carvedilol | Coreg | 12/22/09 | Congestive heart failure |
| Etomidate | Amidate | 12/22/09 | Anesthetic |
| Mycophenolate Mofetil | CellCept | 12/22/09 | Prevent organ rejection following transplant |
| Cosyntropin | Cortrosyn | 12/23/09 | Diagnose disorders of the adrenal glands |